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The work of the Holy Spirit illustrated by New Testament ...

Arthur Crawshay
Alliston Hall



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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



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THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**ILLUSTRATED BY
NEW TESTAMENT SYMBOLS**

**BY
The Rt. Rev. A. C. A. HALL, D.D.
BISHOP OF VERMONT**

**MILWAUKEE
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NOTE

These sermons were preached during the Lent of 1906, in two churches of the diocese—St. Paul's, Burlington, and St. Luke's, St. Albans.

Owing to temporary indisposition I was obliged to write out the first two, that they might be delivered by others. The rest were then written down after they had been preached, to be read elsewhere.

They are printed because comparatively little has been published on the work of the Holy Spirit, and nothing that I know on the New Testament symbols of His working.

A. C. A. H.

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THE TEMPLE OF GOD

I.

THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."—I. Cor. iii. 16, 17.

OUR subject for consideration in these discourses is the work of the Holy Spirit, particularly as illustrated by five different symbolical figures used in the New Testament—all but one of them in the Gospels. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as *living Water* to cleanse and refresh; as *Fire*, which accomplishes a more thorough and searching purification. He is the *Breath* of God, with all the mysteriousness and power of the wind, communicating a new life to man. He is the *Finger* of God, moulding, directing, warning those who submit to His influence. And the gift of the Spirit is spoken of as an *Anointing*, His presence having the healing and strengthening effect of oil.

First, before taking up any of these symbolical representations, let us consider something in

general about the work of the Holy Spirit. How little is this commonly thought of! Yet it covers one-third part of our Christian faith. You recall the familiar summary of our Creed in the Catechism: "What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?" the child is asked. And the answer is this: "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the people of God."

Now about this summary I would ask you to note three things.

1. First, the force of the expression "believe *in*," not simply "believe." We do not merely *believe a fact*, that there is a God, that Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again, that He sent His Spirit. That would be a good deal, but that is not our meaning when we repeat the Creed.

Nor again do we simply *believe a person*, what he says, accept his word and trust his character. More than this is involved in the expression "believe *in*." To believe *in* means to trust and surrender one's self *to him* in whom we believe. So, strictly, the expression is used only of a person. We believe a truth, we believe in a person. In the highest sense and degree it is applicable only

to God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. We believe in, surrender ourselves to, the one Supreme Being, who exists (we are told) in a three-fold manner, and who manifests Himself to us in a three-fold relation. We are baptized into the one Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We must not mutilate or clip our Creed. We believe in God, the supreme ruler of the universe; we believe in Jesus Christ, His Son, who took our nature, and bore our burden, and fought out our battle; we believe too in the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, whom Christ sent and sends to hallow our lives, and make us share in the deliverance from evil which He wrought out for us by His life and death.

All the third part of the Creed, following the words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," belongs to our belief *in Him*. The *Holy Catholic Church* is the body in which the Holy Spirit dwells and which He animates. The *Communion of Saints* is the fellowship between His people which He forms, binding them together in one body with a common life. The *Forgiveness of sins* He brings home to us, not merely as an acquittal from guilt, but as cleansing and sanctifying our lives. He prepares us for a joyful *Resurrection of the body*, making our bodies now His temples; and for the

Life everlasting of which we are to enjoy the beginning and the earnest now.

Just as the articles of the Creed that tell of the birth, the death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ belong to our belief in Him, God the Son, who redeemed us; so all these concluding articles belong to our belief in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth us. Let us try to say our creed with more *intelligence*, and with a certain note of *exultation* as we tell what God has done and is doing for us, and above all with a sense of personal *devotion*, and *self-surrender* to Him in whom we believe.

2. We must always remember that there are *two distinguishing characteristics of the Spirit's work*.

First, it is a *present* work. You will observe the change of tense in the summary of the Creed. "God the Father *made* me and all the world." The work of creation is past, though of course He continually sustains in being that which He originally called into existence.

"God the Son *redeemed* me and all mankind," by His incarnate life on earth and His death upon the cross twenty centuries ago. But "God the Holy Ghost" now, in the present, "*sanctifieth* me and all the people of God." His is a present work, applying to us the benefits of our Lord's past sacri-

fice, and preparing us for His future coming to judge the world.

The same difference of tenses should be marked in the Creed itself. Christ was born, lived, died, and rose again, in the *past*. He *will* come at the last day to judge the quick and the dead. Meanwhile He *now sitteth* at the right hand of God, at the highest place, that is, of honour and power. As St. Peter says, being at the right hand of God exalted, He hath received of the Father the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, and hath poured this gift on us.¹ The work of the Holy Spirit comes between the Ascension and the Return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must not be content with *looking back* to our Lord, as to a dead Saviour on the cross, with gratitude for what He has done and borne on our behalf. We are to *look up* to a *living* Saviour, who died and rose again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, and who continually sends His Spirit to teach and guide and strengthen us.

Our creed not merely recalls past historical facts; it tells of present spiritual *power* for the transformation of our lives. We believe in the Holy Ghost our sanctifier.

3. There is this other characteristic of the

¹ Acts ii. 33.

work of the Holy Spirit. It is an *interior* work. The Holy Spirit, we may say, comes nearer to us than either of the other persons of the blessed Trinity. To speak more accurately, God comes nearest to us by His Spirit. We naturally think of and worship the Father on the throne of heaven, in one sense separate by the very act of creation from the world He creates, though in another sense "In Him we live and move and have our being." Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son, we worship as a Child, in His Mother's lap, or with arms outstretched upon the cross, or at God's right hand. But the Holy Spirit—where should we worship Him? Within our very selves. "Know ye not"—the apostle asks—"that *ye* are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God *dwelleth in you*?"

The action of the Spirit of God is all spiritual; for this reason it is less recognized, as being hidden and unseen. But it is all important. He perfects the work of creation, He applies the benefits of redemption. This is part at any rate of the meaning of the clause in the Nicene Creed, in which we say that the Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier, proceeds from the Father our Creator, and the Son our Redeemer, perfecting the work of each. The lower life which we have by creation is by Him raised to the higher life which is a share in God's

² Acts xvii. 28.

true life. This is expressed in an old translation of the *Veni Creator*:

“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come,
And visit all the souls of Thine;
Thou hast inspired our hearts with life,
Inspire them now with life *divine*.”

I have on other occasions suggested to you this helpful way of thinking of the Trinity, as setting forth God's relation to us: The Father is *God*, in His infinite being;

The Son, Jesus Christ, is *God as man*, acting out God's life and character in our nature and amid our circumstances;

The Holy Spirit is *God in men and women*, reproducing by degrees and more and more *in us* that same character which was perfectly acted out *before us* by the incarnate Son.

God by His Spirit does not remain apart from us. He comes to dwell within us; to underlie, as it were, our faculties; to do nothing instead of us as a substitute, but to enable us to be our best, to rise to our dignity as children of God. This, as I have often explained, is the meaning of the title Comforter or Paraclete or Helper, by which our Lord describes the Holy Spirit in His last discourse.* The Greek word “Paraclete” means quite literally one who is called to our aid, to help us in whatever may be our difficulty or need. So

* St. John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7.

the Spirit of God is promised to be our Helper. In our ignorance He comes to teach us the things of God, to enlighten our understanding; in our perplexity to show us the right path, quickening our conscience; in our weakness to strengthen our will; in our prayers to quicken our affections and enable us to lift up our hearts unto the Lord.

I beg you, brethren, to give some careful thought to the work of the Spirit of God, which we will consider, as illustrated by different spiritual symbols, in successive discourses. Let me point out now *three consequences* which follow from our belief in the Personal Spirit of God our indwelling Sanctifier.

First, the *possibility of holiness*. This we shall consider on other occasions, under different figures. But lay this to heart now. Whatever our weakness, however formidable our spiritual foes, "greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world."⁴ The Holy Ghost is Almighty God. He is the Spirit of ghostly strength enabling us to resist Satan, to withstand temptations, to rise up to our true standard.⁵

Second; belief in the indwelling of the Spirit of God gives to us a new view of sin, as against

⁴I. St. John iv. 4.

⁵Isaiah xi. 2.

such help, in spite of such privilege, in violation of such dignity. Sin in a Christian is a sort of sacrilege. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroy or defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such temple ye are." Think in this light of sins of temper and want of love, as an offence to the Spirit of Love; of sins of falsehood in the presence of the Spirit of Truth; of sins of sensual indulgence, how hateful to the Spirit of Purity.

The *body*, remember, is not left out of consideration by the Christian religion. Our life is to be spiritualized, not by ignoring or neglecting the body, but by remembering its dignity, and seeking to have all its powers controlled by the higher faculties of our nature, our reason and conscience, as they are controlled by the Spirit of God. "Know ye not"—the apostle asks in another passage of the same epistle—"that your *body* is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? Glorify God therefore in your body."

Third; there follows, lastly, this motive for *Penitence*. We have not merely transgressed God's law, nor only violated the law of our being;

* I. Cor. vi. 19, 20.



further, we have grieved and vexed a personal Friend. "Behind the moral law there is a person, and a person who loves us; sin is a wounding of love, and as such must involve *real sorrow* of the heart, and not merely amendment of our will in doing better and avoiding evil for the time to come." This change of *mind* is indeed a most important element of true repentance. But the emotions, too, have their proper part to play. A broken and a contrite heart at the remembrance of our offences against God—our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier—this also we ask. And this He will not despise.

From what we have considered you will see a new and fuller meaning in the penitential psalm:^{*} "Thou, O God (who givest us Thy Holy Spirit), requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make us to understand wisdom secretly." "Turn Thy face from my sins: and put out all my misdeeds." "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Cast me not away from Thy presence: and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. But give me the comfort of Thy help: and stablish me with Thy free, Thy royal, Spirit."

^{*} See Illingworth, *Christian Character*, p. 26.

^{*} Psalm li,

THE LIVING WATER

II.

THE LIVING WATER.

"On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified."—St. John vii. 37-39.

WE consider, in this discourse, Water as one of the several scriptural symbols from which we are hoping to learn something more than we have hitherto understood or realized of the working of the Holy Spirit of God, our Sanctifier.

First note the *occasion* of this proclamation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It helps us to understand the meaning of His words. The whole of this discourse, recorded in the 7th and 8th chapters of St. John's Gospel, was delivered in the Temple at Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, and this particular proclamation was made on the last day, the great day of the feast. The Feast of Tabernacles was the last of three great festivals of the Jewish ecclesiastical year. The Passover and Pentecost, with which our Easter and Whitsunday

correspond, were the other two. This occurred in the fall of the year.¹ It had a two-fold reference, like the other festivals, to stages in the harvest, and to historical events. In connexion with the harvest it celebrated the gathering in of *all* the fruits of the earth, the vintage as well as the grain. At the same time, regarded historically, it commemorated the safe conduct of the people of Israel in their journeying through the wilderness, and their happy settlement in the promised land,—as, historically, the Passover commemorated their deliverance from Egypt, and Pentecost the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai to the enfranchised nation. The feast of Tabernacles was to the Jews a sort of combination of our Thanksgiving day and Fourth of July—both religiously observed. It was a particularly joyous festival, and the festivity culminated in the last day, which was a later addition to the original week, and was intended more especially to celebrate the end of the people's journeyings.

It had three distinctive features, three characteristic ceremonial observances. (1) The first of these gave its name to the festival. It was called the Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths, because during the week of its continuance the people left

¹ See Edersheim, *The Temple, its ceremonies and services in the days of Jesus Christ*.

their ordinary dwelling houses, and lived for the time in booths, made of boughs, constructed on the flat roofs of the Eastern houses, or in the squares and streets of the city. This was a sort of object-lesson, intended to remind the people of their fathers' journeying through the wilderness, dwelling in movable tents, pilgrims under the protection of Almighty God.

(2) Then, second, evening by evening there was a grand illumination in the Temple court. Huge candelabra were erected in what was called the Court of the Women, and shed their radiance over the neighborhood. A torchlight procession was formed, which wound its way through the streets of the city. This was in memory of the Pillar of Fire by night and of Cloud by day which preceded the people in their journeying, the token of God's presence with them, to protect and guide.* It was in reference to this ceremony, and to the historical event which it commemorated, that our Lord proclaimed (as we read in the 8th chapter*) "I am the light of the world (not of one nation only): he that followeth Me (not gazeth from afar off and admireth) shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (not of philosophical

* Num. ix.

* St. John viii. 12.

speculation or only of instruction, but of My example).

(3) The third ceremony of the feast is the one with which we are more particularly concerned. Each morning there was a ceremonial drawing of water from the pool of Siloam, a spring from the rock on which the Temple stood. A priest, accompanied by a joyous procession of worshippers, fetched the water in a golden pitcher, and returned to the Temple, welcomed by a three-fold blast of trumpets and the Hosannas of the people. He then poured the water over the great brazen altar of burnt offering at the time of the morning sacrifice, while the words from the song of Isaiah were chanted: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."⁴

What was the meaning of this ceremony? It was intended to commemorate God's gift of the water which flowed from the rock in Horeb at the smiting of Moses' rod, for the refreshment and cleansing of the weary and travel-stained pilgrims and their flocks and herds through the wilderness.⁵ And it was seen by the Jews to have a deeper spiritual significance—as indeed had the water from the rock—telling of the satisfaction of spiritual needs. It was in this sense

⁴ Isaiah xii. 3.

⁵ Exodus xvii.

that our Lord claimed Himself to fulfil both the historical incident and the commemorative ceremony, when He cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scriptures have said, out of his belly—from within him—shall flow rivers of living water." "And this," the Evangelist explains, "spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive (*i.e.*, at a later date); for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." He must first ascend to the Father in our nature, to plead on our behalf; then in His perfected manhood He would receive gifts for men, and pour forth the Holy Spirit upon His disciples. The figure, you see, is the same with that of St. John's vision in the last chapter of the Revelation.* "The angel showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," the victorious Redeemer.

Water is a natural figure of the Holy Spirit as setting forth His *cleansing* and *refreshing* influence. It is a figure associated in an Eastern climate with all that is invigorating, delightful, and precious. Thus God promises in Isaiah to penitent and disconsolate Israel in captivity, "I will

* Rev. xxii. 1.

pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring.”⁷

In another passage under the image of water God proffers to all that which will forever satisfy the longings of the soul and give it permanent rest:

“Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”⁸ Using the same figure, the psalmist cries, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.”⁹

This then is the meaning of our Lord’s promise. He that believeth in Him shall receive the Spirit of God to cleanse and refresh his life. The belief of which our Lord speaks as a condition for this gift, is, of course, no mere intellectual assent to His claims, nor is it a mere trust in Him; it stands for the entire surrender of ourselves to Him in whom we believe; it includes acceptance of His word, imitation of His example, the seek of His aid. So united with Him our whole being shall be penetrated by that Spirit which was poured forth without measure on His manhood.¹⁰

We see how naturally the figure of water is

⁷ Isaiah xliv. 3.

⁸ Isaiah lv. 1.

⁹ Psalm xlii.

¹⁰ St. John iii. 34.

used in the Sacrament of Baptism to symbolize what St. Paul calls "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."¹¹ Mark in this expression two things. (a) The two gifts of cleansing and refreshing or vivifying, of washing and regeneration, are really one. We are washed by being taken up into a new and higher life, not washed from old sins, and left where we were, to fall into them again. In Baptism we "receive remission of our sins by spiritual regeneration."¹² We are born anew, or from above, of water, the outward and visible sign, and the Spirit, the inward gift.¹³ The Holy Spirit cleanses our inner faculties, as the water cleanses the body. We receive by His Spirit a share in our Lord's renewed manhood, and so are made members of Christ, and children of God, and as such inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. So is fulfilled in us the promise made to Israel through Ezekiel:¹⁴ "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to

¹¹ Titus iii. 5.

¹² Order for Baptism.

¹³ St. John iii. 3, 5.

¹⁴ xxxvi. 25-27.

walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep Mine ordinances, and do them."

(b) This Baptismal cleansing and renewal, we must remember, is a *lasting* benefit. It is not something, as persons often imagine, accomplished once for all at the Font. No, there we ask that we may "enjoy the *everlasting* benediction of God's heavenly washing." All subsequent forgiveness, whether granted to our own prayer or sealed in a ministerial absolution, is a renewal of the remission of our sins in Baptism, a restoration to the position of spiritual privilege in which we were then placed. The cleansing that results from our being united with Christ is to be progressive. All through our life the virtue of His sacred Manhood, with which we have been united, is to be continually called forth.

In our Lord's promise of the Spirit under the symbol of the living water there are three points that I would press upon your attention.

First, it is an *inner gift* of which He speaks. It comes to us from without, but it works from within. "He that believeth on Me, from within him—from the very centre of his being—shall flow rivers of living water." There are outward accompanying signs of the Spirit's coming to us in the Sacraments—the water of Baptism, the

laying on of hands in Confirmation—even as the sound of the mighty rushing wind and the appearance of the tongues of fire gave notice of His presence on the day of Pentecost; but He takes up His abode, unseen, in our inmost being. The Spirit of God comes to hallow and quicken the spirit of man. It is *within ourselves* that we are to worship Him, “the Lord and the life-giver.”¹⁸

Our souls, and because our souls therefore our bodies also, are made His temples.¹⁹ It is no mere outward respectability of conduct that is sufficient for a Christian. The Spirit of God would hallow the very springs of action; He works from the centre to the circumference, from the heart to outward conduct.

“Make me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.” This must be our prayer to Him who tries the reins and the heart, who requires truth in the inward parts.

Second, the influence of the indwelling Spirit is to *spread to every department of our life*. “From within him shall flow rivers of living water.” Beginning with the inspiration of new motives, the Spirit of God would cleanse our *whole* life. Our religion is not to be shut up within our hearts. It must penetrate into and hallow all our

¹⁸ St. John xiv. 16, 17.

¹⁹ I. Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19.

relations, domestic and social, and not less our professional and civic life. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God, for we can do all in the name and after the example of Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son, and by the power of His Spirit.¹⁷ Brethren, is there in our experience this sweetening and purifying of ordinary life by the influence of the Spirit of God? Do there flow from within us rivers of living water? Do we cherish the fellowship or companionship of the Holy Spirit, which we ask at the end of services may abide with us?¹⁸

Third, these streams are not, remember, to be expended solely upon our own lives in their several departments. "Inflame with perfect love each sense, that others' souls may kindle thence," is the prayer of an ancient and familiar hymn addressed to the Holy Spirit. From the believer are to flow forth streams of living water; he is not to be a cistern of stagnant water, but "a living watercourse,"¹⁹ conveying to others by his example and influence, by his word of encouragement and instruction, the cleansing and refreshment which the Spirit of God has communicated to his own life. We shall certainly seek to spread to others

¹⁷ I. Cor. x. 31; Col. iii. 17.

¹⁸ II. Cor. xiii. 14.

¹⁹ Moule, *Veni Creator*, pp. 149, 150.

what we have come to value for ourselves. This is the really serious reflection suggested by our common indifference to the missionary enterprises of the Church. It tells not only—not so much—of selfishness and sloth and avarice; its deeper cause is that we do not realize in our own experience the exceeding preciousness of the Christian revelation, with its gifts of grace and truth, for the cheer and cleansing and healing of human life.

Just one word in conclusion. The promise is of *abundant* streams, "*rivers of living water.*" As we draw upon these spiritual forces, we shall find that they exert themselves more and more in our lives. In the words accompanying the imposition of hands in Confirmation, the Bishop prays that those who receive the gift may "*daily increase in God's Holy Spirit more and more, until they come unto His everlasting kingdom.*" Now we are made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and taste the powers of the world to come,²⁰ we have an earnest, the first-fruits of the Spirit;²¹ we look for the full and perfect realization of His transforming influence, in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come. Then, when the feast of Tabernacles shall have its perfect fulfilment, in the ingathering of all the saints, and their

²⁰ Heb. vi. 5.

²¹ Rom. viii. 23; II. Cor. iii. 18.

happy settlement in their promised home," will the promise be fulfilled: I will give to him that is athirst to drink of the water of life freely."²³ The water that Jesus gives becomes in each believer—in every one who truly belongs to Him—a well of water springing up into eternal life."²⁴

“What is soiled, make Thou pure;
What is wounded, work its cure;
What is parched, fructify;
What is rigid, gently bend;
What is frozen, warmly tend;
Strengthen what goes erringly.”

²³ Comp. Rev. vii.

²³ Rev. xxii. 17.

²⁴ St. John iv. 14.

THE FIRE OF GOD

III.

THE FIRE OF GOD.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."—St. Matthew iii. 11.

THIS is how St. Matthew and St. Luke report the saying of John the Baptist. St. Mark in his parallel account of the conversation omits the words, "and with fire."¹ "I baptized you with water; but He (the coming Messiah) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." This is his version. Now in a case of variation like this, we cannot be certain what were the actual words used, whether these are exactly reported by St. Mark, while St. Matthew and St. Luke added the words "and with fire," as a sort of explanation, or whether the longer form is the more accurate report, which was abbreviated by St. Mark. The former supposition would seem the more probable, that St. Matthew and St. Luke enlarged, and in a way expounded, the Baptist's saying. In this case there is probably a reference (in any case we may see it) to the coming of the Spirit of God on the Day

¹ St. Mark i. 8.

of Pentecost, when His presence was heralded, as it were, by outward signs, the sound of the rushing mighty wind, and the appearance of the streams of fire lighting upon the heads of the Apostles.*

I. The point of the contrast is between the merely symbolical Baptism which John administered, on the one hand, with water only, which told of, but did not convey, any inner and spiritual cleansing, and on the other hand the great spiritual reality which Christ would bestow by the Holy Spirit. Let us be clear about this point first. You will remember the Evangelist's explanation of our Lord's proclamation and promise which we considered in the last discourse, about the streams of living water which should flow from the inmost being of those who believed on Him, for the cleansing and refreshing of their whole life.[†] This spake Jesus, St. John explains, of the Spirit which they that believe on Him were to receive at a later date; for the Holy Spirit was not yet (at that time) given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Jesus must first Himself be perfected through suffering before He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him.[‡] He must enter into the presence of God in our nature, as our representative, and plead His vic-

* Acts ii, 2, 3. † St. John vii, 37-39. ‡ Heb. v. 9.

torious sacrifice. Then He would receive gifts for men, and pour upon His disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit.* Before Christ had suffered and risen and ascended there could not be the gift of the Holy Spirit as we know the gift. So that John's Baptism could only be an external sign, and not a sacrament. It had no inward and spiritual accompanying gift of grace. But when on the Day of Pentecost, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, the apostles baptized in the name of Christ, then there was the sacrament of Holy Baptism; not a mere sign telling of a spiritual gift that we greatly need, that one might desire; but the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual gift, accompanying the sign, as well as symbolized by it. You remember the definition of a sacrament in the Catechism. It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, the outward sign ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we should receive the inner grace, and as a pledge to assure us thereof.⁶ John said that his Baptism, that which he administered, was merely symbolical, it was only "with water," it was "unto repentance," signifying and expressing this; but Christ, he said, would "bap-

* Eph. iv. 8.

⁶ Comp. Art. xxv., "Effectual signs of grace . . . by the which God doth work invisibly in us."

tize with the Holy Ghost"; His Baptism would convey the inner cleansing which it symbolized.

II. To this contrast is added a second: "He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost *and with fire.*" It is not meant, of course, that fire would be the ordinary accompaniment, or outward sign, of His Baptism. Christ had Himself spoken of being born again, from above, of Water and the Spirit.⁷ The expression meant that the inner gift of His Baptism would have such a thoroughly purifying effect that it might be thought of as symbolized rather by fire than by water.

What is the meaning of this contrast between the symbol of Water and the symbol of Fire? The latter tells of a far more searching purification. We may put it thus: Water cleanses, fire purges. The cleansing of water is much more on the surface; it washes off a stain. Fire penetrates within. As in the case of mineral substances, fire severs the true metal from the dross or base alloy. The metal is not merely cleansed, it is purged.

We see how this saying about a Baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire is connected with those passages of Scripture which tell of the searching character of God's judgment. He

⁷ St. John iii. 5.

judges not according to the outward appearances. He tries the reins and the heart. He is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any created thing that is not plain and manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and laid bare before His eyes with whom we have to do (or to whom we have to give our account).^{*} The figure used by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is probably derived from the Levitical sacrifices. The animal victim was laid upon the altar by the priests, its throat cut, the body opened. Perhaps the illustration would be more familiar to us if we thought of a patient stretched on the operating table in a hospital, stripped, and then, while under ether, an incision made by the surgeon's knife, and the inner organs and their actual condition exposed to his scrutiny and healing treatment. Even so, stripped of every disguise, whereby we may seek to hide facts from ourselves and from others, our moral condition lies bare and in full view before the eye of God.

A similar lesson, enforced by the use of this figure of fire, is found in another passage which is often a cause of perplexity. In I. Cor. iii., St. Paul speaks of the fire of the great day of the Lord's appearing, proving each man's work of

^{*} I. Sam. xvi. 7; Jer. xi. 20; Heb. iv. 12, 13.

what sort it is. This passage is sometimes quoted as Scriptural authority for the doctrine of Purgatory. It really has no reference to any process of purification in the intermediate state between Death and the Day of Judgment. Doubtless there is such purification. We may well look forward to deepening penitence, in the clearer light of truth, bringing deepening purification, until in perfected penitence we find perfected purification. But in this passage the image is of a momentary effect, not of a slow, continuous process. "The Lord shall appear in a flash of light and a flame of fire. The light shall dart its rays into the innermost recesses of the moral world. The flame shall reduce to ashes the superstructure raised by the careless or unskilful builder. The builder himself shall flee for his life. He shall escape, but scorched, and with the marks of the flames about him." The wood, hay, stubble—works done without a pure motive—will be burned up. The gold, silver, and precious stones of works really carried out with a right intention for God's glory will stand the test. "The fire shall prove every man's work of what sort it is."

Now the fire of God's holiness and of His searching judgment, the flash of light which will

* Bishop Lightfoot, *Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 193.

accompany His manifested presence in the last day, has its counterpart in lesser degree now by the presence of the Spirit of God in our hearts. He enables us, compels us, to see things, and ourselves, as they, and we, really are; to face the actual facts of our moral condition and standing, not what we would like to be, or like others to suppose us to be, but what we really are; and to judge ourselves by true standards, not by comparison with others, or by the majority of men and women, or by a conventional standard, but by the standard of God's holy will and commandments (which we are solemnly pledged to keep), by what we *should* be, and *might* have become if only we had been true to the inspirations and warnings of conscience, and diligent and faithful in the use of the helps which God has provided.

Another difficult passage may be referred to in this connexion. At the end of the ninth chapter of St. Mark, our Lord is reported as saying, "Everyone shall be salted with fire."¹⁰ The words that follow, "and (*or as*) every sacrifice shall be salted with salt," are probably an explanatory gloss added in later Western manuscripts, referring to the rule that salt must be offered with the Levitical sacrifices, as the symbol of incorruption.¹¹ For the Christian disciple, our Lord

¹⁰ St Mark ix. 49.

¹¹ Lev. ii. 13.

means, the salt prescribed in the old law is realized by fire, the emblem of a still more thorough purification. The divine fire is to purify, and preserve and consummate the sacrifice of our lives.

We see then something of the meaning of being baptized with the Holy Spirit as with fire (so we may paraphrase the saying). It means to be wrapped and, as it were, bathed in this purifying influence, which will penetrate our whole being and purge out all that is evil and displeasing to God.

III. Now I will ask you to consider *two means* by which the Holy Spirit accomplishes this purifying work, symbolized by fire. Fire gives (1) light and (2) heat. The Holy Spirit (1) *illuminates* our mind and conscience, and (2) He *kindles* the heart with its affections.

1. *He illuminates the mind and conscience.*
(a) His illumination of the *conscience* we have already touched on. He convinces, convicts, of sin. This should be our constant prayer: "Try me, O God, and search the ground of my heart: look well if there be any way of wickedness in me."¹³ If we say that we have no sin, or have not sinned, St. John warns us, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if, on the other hand, we confess our sins with real sorrow for the

¹³ Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

past, humbling ourselves for what has been wrong, and firmly purposing to amend our lives for the future, then God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and not only to *forgive* the past, but more and more to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness."¹³ (b) The Holy Spirit is spoken of by our Lord as the Spirit of truth, who will lead us into all truth¹⁴—not bring truth close up to us, but lead us into the truth, truth of life as well as truth of belief, the truth of the Ten Commandments, and of the Beatitudes, and of the Fruits of the Spirit, as well as the truth of the Creed. He *illuminates the mind*. For how many people are the commands and promises and warnings of Scripture as if they were written in viewless ink. The characters exist, but not for us. The paper must be brought to the light and heat of the fire, and then the writing comes out clearly. So the Scriptures are often read, and the Creed recited, and perhaps the Sacraments received, without any real comprehension of their meaning. We know the bare letter, the grammatical meaning, but not its spiritual significance and force. "Open, Lord, mine eyes," we must pray, "that I may see the wondrous things of Thy law."¹⁵

2. But the Holy Spirit not only enlightens the

¹³ I. St. John i. 8, 9.

¹⁴ St. John xvi. 13.

¹⁵ Psalm cxix. 18.

mind and conscience; He *kindles the heart*, and so stirs the will. Notice with regard to these two offices of the Holy Spirit of God, that they go together. The same flame illuminates and kindles. You cannot have its light without the heat, nor its heat without the light. So we cannot expect or reckon upon the Holy Spirit's influence for one purpose, if we are not cherishing it, much less if we are resisting it, for another. If we would have Him enlighten our understanding, we must submit to His purification of our hearts.

He kindles *all* our affections; quickening a love and desire for all that is true and honorable, just and pure, lovely and of good report;¹⁶ and at the same time inspiring a hatred and contempt for all that is false and foul, base and bad and mean. Hatred of evil, remember, is as much a Christian's duty as love of goodness. The one will necessarily flow from the other. All our affections are implanted by God, and none of them are simply to be quenched. All are to be directed aright by the Spirit of truth, and when rightly directed then strongly exercised.

We invoke the Holy Spirit as the "fire of love."¹⁷ True human love burns up what is poor and unworthy. Love for a mother, for a wife,

¹⁶ Phil. iv. 8.

¹⁷ In the *Veni Creator*, hymn 380.

or for a pure, good girl whom he hopes one day to make his wife, keeps many a man straight. Respect and affection leave no room for low and base desires. Let me give another illustration drawn from hospital experience. You know how much is possible now in surgery since the introduction of aseptic treatment, that before could not have been attempted. The instruments, the cloths that will be used, the water, the dress of the operator and attendants are sterilized. How? By the application of great heat, in which germs that would cause mischief are unable to live. The fire of love shames away poor desires. By quickening the best it raises us above the lower. This is what St. Paul means when he says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye *shall not* fulfil the lusts of the flesh."¹⁸ We need not be all the time directly fighting evil; we have but to cherish a moral atmosphere in which evil cannot live and falls away. This zeal for goodness surely is a part of that purifying fire which our Lord came to send and spread upon the earth.¹⁹

Thus we get an idea of the inner baptism of fire which the Holy Ghost bestows, as distinct from a baptism merely symbolized by water.

There are two Greek words used in the New

¹⁸ Gal. v. 16.

¹⁹ St. Luke xii. 49.

Testament, both of which we are obliged to translate in English by the one word "pure." They may be thought of as corresponding roughly with the cleansing by water from without, and with the purging by fire within.

One word is familiar to us in the name Katharine. It tells of purity in the sense of freedom from spot or stain, the purity of one from whom evil is kept at a distance.

The other word is used in a familiar passage where St. John says that at our Lord's manifestation His faithful disciples will be like Him, for they will see Him as He is. Then he adds, "Every man that hath this hope set on the Lord, purifieth himself, even as He, our great Head and Representative, is pure."²⁰ This word tells of a burning purity that consumes the evil with which it comes in contact. This is the purity which the Spirit of God gives, which Christ our Lord exemplified, which we are to reproduce, individually and collectively, in society, in business, in politics—frowning down, shaming and driving away all that is contrary to God's love and truth and holiness.

²⁰I. St. John iii. 2, 3. See Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, p. 101.

THE BREATH OF GOD

IV.

THE BREATH OF GOD.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."
—St. John iii. 8.

WE come to the third of the great symbolic figures by which the working of the Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier, is illustrated in the New Testament Scriptures. The very variety of figures used is instructive. Spiritual realities require many and varied symbols to express their manifold aspects and relations. One figure sets forth one idea; another idea (contained in the same truth) is illustrated by another figure.

Water, Fire, Wind, each is an illustration of some aspect of the Spirit's operation.

Water tells of the cleansing and refreshing effect of His presence; Fire, of the thorough purification which He accomplishes, by the illumination of the mind and conscience, and by His kindling of the heart's affections. The Wind, we shall see, has three characteristics which are symbolical of the Spirit of God in His working.

I. The first characteristic of the Wind is that which our Lord insisted on in His conversation

with Nicodemus, its *mysteriousness*. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

You will remember the course of the conversation. Nicodemus, a celebrated teacher and a member of the ruling council of the Jews, with great caution and with something apparently of a patronizing air, professes a certain belief in our Lord's divine mission as "a Teacher come from God." He is led to this belief by a consideration of our Lord's miracles.¹

Christ's reply is addressed not so much to Nicodemus' words as to his thought. He went straight to the question in Nicodemus' mind, How is it possible to enter into the new society—the Kingdom of God—of which you speak, and which you are seeking to establish?

Our Lord says, You cannot understand till you are born again, or from above. Man's natural powers cannot realize that which is essentially spiritual. It is not learning, or intellectual argument, nor mere reformation of conduct, which is needed, but a new life is required to be My disciple, and life begins with birth. "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."²

¹ St. John iii. 1, 2.

² Verse 3.

Nicodemus objects, perhaps with some ridicule, that to be born again is impossible. How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Apart from the physical impossibility, what would be the moral gain? How could he undo, or do away with the result which years have brought? A man is the result of all that he has done in his past life.

In our Lord's second reply He reaffirms what He before stated, with some explanation of the mode of the new birth: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit (water, the outward medium, and the Spirit of God, the efficient cause) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." He then first brushes away Nicodemus' material notion of a second birth in the same order. That, if it were possible, would not be of any avail. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"; a second birth of your earthly parents would only give again the nature, with its limitations and disorder, you derive from them. It is not merely a *second* birth, but a birth "*from above*" which is required, that you may share the nature of your heavenly Father. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit."^a

Then our Lord disposes of Nicodemus' ra-

^a Verse 4.

^a Verse 5.

^a Verse 6.

tionalistic objection by shewing that there are things wonderful and mysterious in nature as in grace, and as far beyond ordinary human intelligence, where we see the effects, but cannot trace the origin and course; and He points to the analogy of the wind. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born from above. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."^a

The Greek might be translated (as in the margin of the Revised Version), "The Spirit breatheth where it willeth." Indeed it is somewhat difficult to justify translating the same word (with the same definite article) at the beginning of the verse, "the wind," and at the end of the verse, "the Spirit." But whatever the translation, there is a reference to the wind as a symbol of the Spirit, whether the analogy and parallel is actually stated, or if it is implied in the use of a word which might signify either the higher Spirit or the lower wind. Both are thought of as the Breath of God—whether in the natural or in the spiritual sphere.

The wind is mysterious; its presence plainly perceived by its effects, but its origin and course

^a Verses 7, 8.

scarcely traceable by man. This was, I suppose, absolutely the case when our Lord spoke. He was addressing, of course, the men of His day. We in later times have learned much about the course of the wind. Charts of the atmosphere are made. Lines and courses along which winds prevail are marked out. Storm centres are known and noted. Storms are foretold with considerable accuracy. A depression in a particular place, we know will cause a rush of air in that direction. The velocity of the wind is measured. But still, with all our advance in knowledge, much remains and will remain unknown. A sudden squall on the lake, arising when the air is in a condition of unstable equilibrium, may surprise the weather-wise. The wind remains mysterious. "As thou knowest not the way of the wind, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: so thou knowest not the work of God who doeth all."

"So," our Lord declares, "is everyone that is born (that hath been begotten) of the Spirit." In the true Christian man or woman there is a life—a grace, a power, a peace—that you cannot trace to any merely natural causes. Heredity does not account for it, for the character of parents may be very different; nor education nor environment, for they often fail to produce the same result. It

¹ Eccl. xi. 5.

must be due, you feel, to a communication of life from above.*

You see that the words are not to be regarded (as they are sometimes quoted) as if in effect they contradicted what our Lord had said just before about being born of water and the Spirit, as if there were really no guarantee that the inner gift would follow or accompany the right and due administration and reception of the sacrament. Two points should be made plain here.

"The wind bloweth—the Spirit breatheth—where it listeth." Yes, certainly, and therefore when God has marked out means by which we shall receive His spiritual gift, we may be sure of so receiving it, when we approach the ordinance with fitting dispositions.

"The wind bloweth—the Spirit breatheth—where it willeth." His freedom certainly does not exclude His operation though ordinary and appointed channels. You may make a tunnel for the wind and create a draught; the wind will surely be attracted, and rush and whistle through the tunnel.

If to Israel of old God said, "In all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee," to us in the Christian

* See Mozley, *University Sermons*, VII., "The Work of the Spirit on the Natural Man."

Church the promise is, In every ordinance which I have appointed, there will I meet with you and bless you, with that special blessing which is attached to each such ordinance—cleansing in Baptism, strengthening in Confirmation, restoration in Absolution, aid to perform the appointed ministry in Ordination. Sacraments are covenant meeting-places with God. But while we are bound to seek His grace in the appointed way, through the ordained channel, God is not bound to bestow His gift in no other way. Sacraments are “necessary where they may be had.” There are impediments to the reception of sacraments, not only the obstacle of distance where no minister is at hand, but the obstacle—which may be just as real—of prejudice and ignorance not due to the person’s own fault, but the result of tradition and training. All such impediments God—we may be sure—takes into account. He ties us; He does not tie Himself.

2. Our Lord’s words plainly teach us that the test of all is in the *effect* produced. “Thou hearest the sound thereof.” We ought to perceive the Spirit’s working in ourselves; it ought to be manifest to others, in its purifying, quickening, transfiguring influence upon our lives. “By their fruits,” Christ said, “ye shall know them.” You will remember His solemn warning. Many in the

^o Exodus xx. 24.

last day will say, Lord, Lord, hast Thou not taught in our streets, have not we eaten and drunk in Thy presence—and in Thy name done many wonderful works—to whom He will answer: “I never knew you; depart from Me, ye *workers of iniquity*.” Attending means of grace and receiving sacraments is not the great point; but making good use of the grace and help bestowed on us through sacraments and other means of grace.¹⁰

II. The Wind—the air in motion—is a *principle of life*. We must breathe it in. In some extreme cases it is even necessary for awhile to force air into the lungs by artificial means, so as to preserve life. This outer atmospheric breath of God (so we may regard it) is necessary to sustain our physical life. So the Spirit which He breathes forth quickens our spiritual life, communicates to us the very life, the moral character, of God, makes us “partakers of the divine nature.”¹¹ It is in this sense that we speak in the Nicene Creed of the Holy Ghost as “the Life-giver” (“the Lord, and the Giver of life”), preëminently as giving this higher life. It was with this significance that our Lord Jesus Christ on the evening of the first Easter Day *breathed upon His disciples* and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.”¹² There was an out-

¹⁰ St. Matt. vii. 22, 23; St. Luke xiii. 26, 27.

¹¹ II. Peter i. 4.

¹² St. John xx. 22.

ward and visible sign in His breathing, of the inward and spiritual gift of His Spirit. This from the risen Lord was an anticipation of the fuller gift at Pentecost from the ascended Lord, given with the same outward sign, in somewhat different form, of the rushing, mighty Wind. Jesus Christ communicates the life that is in Him to His disciples, not merely to enable them to accomplish the ministerial commission which He then bestowed ("Whose sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain they are retained"), but for the hallowing of their own personal lives likewise. His sacred manhood was all under the control of the Holy Spirit. It was fashioned at the first by His operation;¹³ the Spirit was poured upon Him at His Baptism;¹⁴ in the power of the Spirit He met and conquered the tempter; His ministry was performed in the same power. Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God.¹⁴ Now that which made His manhood to be what it was, He communicated to His disciples, His moral and spiritual life, of purity and patience, of courage and self-sacrifice, of gentleness and meekness, of prayer and obedience. This is the life of God as man, the life of

¹³ St. Luke i. 35.

¹⁴ St. Luke iii. 22.

¹⁵ St. Luke iv. 1, 14, 18; Acts x. 38; Heb. ix. 14.

the true man, produced by the Spirit of God in whose image man was made.

You will remember the striking figure in the prophecy of Ezekiel,¹⁶ of the restoration of Israel from captivity to renewed life as a nation. The prophet is shown a vision of dry bones scattered through a valley. Can these dry bones live? The Lord says, I will cause breath to enter into them and they shall live. Then first they come together, bone to bone, so that the human frame is restored; they are clothed upon with sinew, flesh and skin; and then the wind as the breath of God blows upon them that they may live, and they stand up a great army. The vision is applicable not only to the restoration of Israel as a nation, but to our spiritual recovery.

Here I would beg you to notice an important distinction. The Spirit of God is the Giver of life. He is "the fount of life," as well as "the fire of love."¹⁷ Apart from His presence is spiritual death. But what is death? Death is not the mere *absence of life*; it is the *loss of life*, or the absence of life where you have a right to expect to find life. The pebble has no life, but it is not dead. The lifeless stone you treasure as a jewel, and wear it upon your person. The dead flower,

¹⁶ Ch. xxxvii.

¹⁷ *Veni Creator*, Hymn 380.

the withered stalk, which has lost the life it had, you throw away. The animal has not rational life, you make of it a pet, and wonder at the approach of its instinct to reason. But the idiot child, who has only animal instinct and not the human reason that should be found there, you regard with mingled pity and horror. So there may be men and women keenly alive to earthly interests, to pleasures and business, not only to bridge-whist but to literature and art and politics, who to the things of God, the interests of the spirit, the concerns of eternity, are altogether dead. How grievous and pitiable a sight! Made in the image of God, with faculties capable of holding communion with Him, but these faculties dead, because not quickened by the Spirit of God, the life-giver."

III. The *force* of the wind is specially illustrated in the sign accompanying His descent upon the Day of Pentecost, in the sound of the rushing mighty wind.¹⁸ We in Vermont know its force as it blows up and down the lake, and through the valleys. It is not merely a gentle, whispering breeze; the very same air, in greater velocity of current, becomes a rushing mighty wind—not merely for destruction as in a tornado sweeping all before it, unroofing houses, uprooting trees, throwing down strong buildings; but carrying for-

¹⁸ Rom. viii. 13.

¹⁹ Acts ii. 2.

ward likewise the vessel on its voyage across the ocean. Such was the effect of the coming of the Spirit of God upon the apostles. They no longer flee before foes, nor deny their Master, nor shut themselves in the upper room with closed doors for fear of the Jews; publicly in the temple they proclaim their message, and witness to Jesus Christ; before the hostile council when bidden no more to teach in His name they reply, We must obey God rather than men, we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

This is the Spirit which we have received. I have often explained the full meaning of the title by which our Lord described Him, not very happily translated in our ordinary Bibles "the Comforter."²⁰ To modern ears the Comforter tells of one who gives consolation. This indeed the Spirit of God gives to the penitent and the mourner, but He gives much more. The best English equivalent for the Greek word used in the Gospel is "the Helper," one called to our side, to aid us, whatever our need may be. The Spirit of truth He comes to teach us in our ignorance; in our perplexity to guide us as the Spirit of counsel; as our Advocate to suggest thoughts and words of prayer; in our weakness, as the Spirit of ghostly

²⁰ Acts iv. 18-20.

²¹ St. John xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7.

strength, He enables us to resist temptation. He enlightens the understanding, quickens the conscience, purifies the affections, and fortifies the will.

Think of the mysteriousness and freedom, the life-giving property, the force of the Spirit of God, the Breath of the Most High. Throw open the window, let in the pure air. Open your lungs and draw in its health-giving influence. Spread your sails, and surrender yourselves to its powerful impulses.

So may we understand more of the meaning of our familiar collect: Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts—How?—by the inspiration, the inbreathing, of Thy Holy Spirit of love and truth and purity, that so we may enjoy not merely a negative cleansing in the absence of evil, but may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy Name—not only in our sacred service, but by the use of all the faculties of our being for Thy glory, as they are directed and controlled by Thy Spirit's guidance.

“Stablish me with Thy free, Thy princely Spirit.”²²

²² Psalm li. 12.

THE FINGER OF GOD

V.

THE FINGER OF GOD.

"If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."—St. Luke xi. 20.

If you will take the trouble to compare the 11th chapter of St. Luke with the 12th chapter of St. Matthew, you will see that the two evangelists are relating the same discourse of our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Matthew's account being somewhat fuller. Our Lord is engaged in a controversy with the Pharisees. He had restored to a man the power of sight and speech, of which he had been deprived (as it was supposed) under the influence of an evil spirit. The powers of conscious sensation and volition were suspended. We cannot here enter upon a discussion of the question of demoniacal possession—what was its exact nature, how far the symptoms may be explained by natural causes, how far the physical effects were connected with moral causes. All this is a most interesting consideration. But the explanation is not important for our present purpose. Our Lord had wrought a work of mercy and of might. The

people were amazed at His healing power. Is this, they ask, the Son of David, the promised and expected Messiah, who will banish all ills, and set up a kingdom of health and peace, of justice and freedom,—individual and national, physical and moral? The Pharisees, when they learned of the impression made on the people, since they could not deny the reality of our Lord's miracles, set themselves to explain away their evidential value. They whispered among the people, By Beelzebub, the prince of the demons, by his aid, casteth He out demons. Jesus perceived their thoughts. He saw the meaning of the whispers and the looks of real or affected horror. He makes a twofold reply to the charge. (1) First, to suppose that Satan (with whom Beelzebub was practically identified) is lending aid to destroy his own power or kingdom is on the face of it absurd. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." Reason, calmness, vigour, these are not *his* gifts to men.

Then (2) He adds an *argumentum ad hominem*. Supposing your explanation to be true, by whose aid, Jesus asks, do your sons, your disciples, that is, act in like cases, in their exorcisms? They, you claim, control and restore the disordered reason of sufferers. By what power do *they* act?

Then our Lord goes on with the saying I read.

This is differently reported by St. Matthew and St. Luke. St. Matthew makes Him say, "If I by *the Spirit of God* cast out demons, then the kingdom of God is come unto you"; but St. Luke reports the saying as, "If I by *the finger of God*." Now there can be no doubt that St. Luke gives the *actual words* used by our Lord, while St. Matthew gives the *meaning* of His expression. For a narrator to explain or translate a figure of speech would be quite natural; while it would be altogether unlikely that a simple statement would be changed into a figure.

Besides, our Lord evidently has in mind the parallel controversy of Moses and Aaron with the magicians of Egypt, recorded in Exodus viii. At first the signs which Moses and Aaron wrought in evidence of their mission the magicians imitated and reproduced. Their rods, too, became serpents; they turned the water into blood (or appeared to do so); they summoned frogs to cover the land. In each case, according to the old story, what Moses and Aaron did, the magicians did in like manner. But beyond a certain point they could not follow. And when they failed, and came to the end of their power, they exclaimed of what Moses and Aaron did, "*This is the finger of God,*"¹ this is unmistakably His doing. Our Lord had

¹ Ex. viii. 19.

this in mind. The Pharisees withstood His claims, as the magicians did those of Moses and Aaron, God's messengers of old. He is exercising Divine power, even as the Egyptians were obliged to confess that Moses and Aaron did.

The Finger of God is used here, as elsewhere in Holy Scripture, for the Spirit of God, as a symbol of His working and operation. It is this figure which we are to consider now.*

Dextra Dei Tu digitus, "Dread Finger of the Hand divine," so, as well as under the titles of "The fount of life" and "the fire of love," we invoke Him in the *Veni Creator*.†

In what sense are we to understand the symbol?

I. Now first of all we remember our Lord's declaration to the woman of Samaria, "God is Spirit," not "a Spirit," as if He were one among many, but "Spirit."‡ That is His essential being. He has no bodily form nor parts, such as we could see with our eyes, or touch with our hands, or in any way apprehend with our senses. He is wholly Spirit, as is our own soul, the immaterial part of our complex being, with its spiritual powers of thought and affection and choice. Moreover, as

* Ex. viii. 19, xxxi. 18; Deut. ix. 10; Psalm viii. 3.

† Hymn 380. For the Latin and notes, see the author's volume on *Confirmation*, in the Oxford Library of Practical Theology, pp. 202, 204.

‡ St. John iv. 24.

Spirit God is everywhere present, not more truly in one place than in another; not more really in heaven than on earth, though in heaven He manifests His glory to those who are fitted to behold it; not more really in church than at your supper table, or wherever you spent the day, or last night, in the office or store or theatre—though He vouchsafes a special blessing in the assembly of His people.

II. This it is which makes the thought of God so difficult for people to grasp. It is too great, a person says; I cannot get hold of it. The thought of One who is everywhere present, a purely spiritual being, omnipotent and omniscient, eludes me; it baffles my understanding and bewilders my imagination. There comes in the temptation to idolatry, so common a temptation not only to rude and ignorant people, but in one way or another to all in every age and at every stage of development. People want something that will represent God, some form under which they can think of Him and worship Him. Men did not originally suppose that the image or idol actually was God, but that it *stood for* Him. An inanimate object like a stone represented Him, for its stability; a living creature, like a bull, for its strength; the sun and moon and stars, the heavenly bodies, for their beauty and wide-reaching influence. Under these

forms the supreme being was worshipped. This is what is forbidden by the Second Commandment: "Thou shalt not make to thyself the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them." Notice the distinction between the First Commandment and the Second. The Second is not a repetition of the First in longer form. The First Commandment forbids us to worship any but the One true God; the Second Commandment forbids us to worship Him in any but the right way, as He has revealed Himself. Why is this forbidden? Because any representation such as we could make, material or immaterial, must give a false idea of God; if not a caricature, at least it must convey an inadequate conception of His spiritual being and majesty.

III. You see how God meets this difficulty in the Incarnation. You do find it hard, He says in effect, to think of Me as I am. You are continually tempted to take up with unworthy representations. I will show you how you can rightly think of Me and picture Me. So God takes a created form, assumes human nature, with all its physical, intellectual, and moral faculties and organs. The Word became flesh, and acted out God's character in our nature and amid our circumstances; He

translated the divine perfections into language we could understand, the language of human conduct.^{*} So true and full a revelation of God was thus given, that Christ Himself said, He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;[†] not of course His infinite being, but what really concerns you, what you want to know—what sort of person God is, what kind of character He has, the way in which He looks at things and judges men. *This* is shown in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, who dwelt among us full of grace and truth.

Such a revelation was only possible because man was originally made in the image of God, his inner being a reflection of the Divine Being, and so fitted to be the instrument of God for the supreme revelation of Himself.

The emphasis, of course, in this representation is on the moral side, not on the animal and physical side. This is the case in all true art. The true artist is not content with a realistic reproduction of a person's outward form and features. This he leaves for the photographer. He seeks as far as possible in a portrait to delineate the real man within, the inner character expressing itself in the outward form and manner.

So in Jesus Christ, God as Man, we are to

^{*} St. John i. 14, 18.

[†] St. John xiv. 9.

look for the manifestation of God's character, His love and truth, His holiness and pity.⁷ But we may make an external representation, not of the Divine Being, but of the Son of Man in whom He manifested Himself. We may have a picture or a statue, a representation painted or chiselled, of the incarnate Son of God, as a Child in His Mother's arms, or taking the children into His own arms, or with His arms outstretched upon the cross, because God has thus manifested Himself. We must not of course render divine homage to the figure; that we offer to no created thing or person, not to the Blessed Virgin or saint or angel, only to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but we may use such representations as sacred memorials to call to our mind Christ's life and death.

IV. All this being so, we come back to our immediate subject, and ask how are we to understand such expressions as this of the Finger of God? We do not mean when we use such figurative expression that Almighty God has Arm or Hand, Eye or Ear, or Finger; we intend to attribute to Him powers corresponding with those which *we* exercise through these organs. So the proverb declares, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."⁸ It

⁷ Comp. II. Cor. iv. 6, The moral glory. ⁸ Prov. xv. 3.

means that God has a knowledge such as we acquire by sight—a vision penetrating to the inmost recesses of our moral being, and a judicial vision, beholding the good as good and the evil as evil, as the human eye may gleam with delight at beholding some fair object, while it turns with pain and horror from the sight of that which is distorted or foul. The psalm speaks of the Lord's ear being open to the prayer of the righteous:⁹ He is attentive to the desires of His servants. So it is said, "With His own right hand, and with His holy arm hath He gotten Himself the victory," or "In His hand are all the deep places of the earth": power and might are ascribed to Him.¹⁰

You will remember that in the Confirmation service the Bishop prays for those upon whom he has just laid his hands in blessing, that God's fatherly hand may ever be over them: he invokes God's protection to shield and guard them, to ward off evil or overrule it to their greater good.

In the same figurative fashion the Finger of God is to be understood. "As the hand denotes power generally, the finger symbolizes power in its concentrated and specially directed energy."¹¹

We may note three ways in which the Finger

⁹ Psalm xxxiv. 15.

¹⁰ Psalm xcvi. 2, xcv. 4.

¹¹ Plumptre on St. Luke xi. 20, in *New Testament Commentary for English Readers*.

may be understood to represent the operation of the Spirit of God. All, remember, is spiritual. His work is within, acting upon our immaterial nature.

1. The finger stands for power used delicately and with skill, to produce not a mere rough outline, but a carefully finished work. We say of a clumsy person, "His fingers are all thumbs," meaning that he is incapable of any fine and delicate work. The finger is used by the woman in her knitting and embroidery; by the artist with his brush or pencil; by the musician as he touches the notes or strings of his instrument; by the engraver with his tool. So with the action of the Spirit of God on man's spirit: He would trace God's likeness in our hearts and lives, and reproduce in us His character. By partaking of the divine nature we are to be made in very truth "children of God," bearing a likeness to our heavenly Father.¹¹ How should this thought shame us for the poor standard that we set before ourselves! Not to have done anything very bad, many a man contents himself with this. Is this a worthy standard for one who has been made a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? We ought to examine ourselves not merely by breaches of the Ten Commandments, or by the

¹¹ II. St. Peter i. 4.

great sins into which we may have fallen; but by the sketch of the Christian character which our Lord gave in the Beatitudes," by the Fruits of the Spirit which St. Paul enumerates: Love, joy, peace towards God; long-suffering, gentleness, active goodness towards others; and in ourselves thorough faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.¹³ We are called to cultivate holiness, not merely to avoid sin. The Finger of God would trace the finer lines, the delicate shades, of God's character in our lives. For this there is needed on our part that we should yield ourselves to His operation. Like the wax or clay to be fashioned by the artist, we must render ourselves plastic to His touch, promptly obeying His inspiration, and accepting His discipline.

2. As we saw that the purification of the Spirit symbolized by Fire is carried out in two ways, by the illumination of the mind and conscience, and by the kindling of the heart's affections; so the training of the Spirit symbolized by the Finger is specially accomplished in two ways.

The Finger *points*. At the street corner, by the wayside, you see the finger-post, pointing out the right direction. So the Spirit of God is promised as the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all

¹³ St. Matt. v. 1-10.

¹⁴ Gal. v. 22, 23.

truth."¹⁵ How often we are in difficulty and perplexity! I wish I knew what I ought to do, what course I ought to take, some one says, in some question—of domestic or social life, about business, or concerning religious and ecclesiastical relations. In such circumstances a person, if wise, seeks advice from a parent or a friend whom he can trust, from his spiritual pastor. (The clergyman, remember, is not merely to preach to the assembled congregation; he is to be the counsellor and friend of his people in their individual needs and difficulties.) But do not neglect to seek the advice of the Spirit of Ghostly Counsel who will speak in your own heart and conscience, and bring home to you the word spoken in your outward ear by parent or friend or pastor. His guidance is pledged to us, if we will seek it. "Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it," when you are in danger of turning to the right hand or to the left."¹⁶ "Them that are meek shall He guide in judgment, and such as are gentle, them shall He teach His way."¹⁷ *Listen* then for His voice; *look* for the guiding of the Finger of God.

3. The Finger is not only stretched out to point and direct; it is *raised to forbid* or reprove and check. Parent or teacher lifts the finger in re-

¹⁵ St. John xvi. 13. ¹⁶ Isaiah xxx. 21. ¹⁷ Psalm xxv. 9.

proach, saying, "Fie upon you," to the child, "How can you do or say what brings shame upon your family? " So the Finger of God is raised within our conscience, calling shame upon us for actions or words or thoughts unworthy of our Christian profession, warning us off from what is contrary to truth and purity, to reverence and faith. It is like the danger-post set up on the lake or pond to warn us that the ice is dangerous. Some people take delight in the mere venturesomeness of skating over thin ice. How many do this in the moral sphere—going just as near as possible to danger, taking pleasure in risky situations, in their reading or companionships or amusements, risking their purity or their faith, which should be guarded not less carefully than their purity! One special hint I desire to give here. It seems to be the object of many modern novels not to set before the reader some high and inspiring example of heroism or virtue; but in realistic fashion to expose evil, to show the rottenness and corruption of different phases of society. This may be done with a good intention. But its effect, I am sure, is mischievous. It is quite possible for us to know too much about evil. We may become familiarized with it, so that it loses for us its horror, and unconsciously our own tone is coarsened and our standards lowered. Moreover, such representa-

tions are generally exaggerated, at any rate in the impression they give. In spite of anything that may be written, in spite of all the evil that undoubtedly exists, not all the men and women in society in New York or Boston or London, are gamblers, are marrying other people's wives or husbands, or cheating, or running into hopeless and impossible debt;—no more than all our insurance men are scamps, as a good many undoubtedly have been shown to be. The Finger of God would point us to whatsoever things are true and honorable, just and pure, lovely and of good report—that we may think on these things.¹⁸ He would warn us off from all unnecessary contact with what is false and foul, and base and bad, and mean.

You see then something of the meaning of our Lord's words, "If I by the Finger of God cast out demons, the kingdom of God is come unto you." If the Spirit of God is tracing the features of God's likeness in our hearts, pointing and guiding us to what is good and true, and warning us off from all that is evil; then He is casting out demons; then God's kingdom of truth and purity and love is being set up amongst us.

We must (1) *yield* ourselves to His fashioning, (2) *follow* where He points, (3) *heed* His warning.

¹⁸ Phil. iv. 8.

THE UNCTION

VI.

THE UNCTION.

"Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. . . . The anointing which ye received from Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as His anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in Him."—I. St. John ii. 20, 27.

ALL the other symbols of the Holy Spirit's working in the soul which we have considered have been found in the Gospels. Most of them were given by our Lord Himself.

It is He who promises the stream of living *water* to cleanse and refresh our life.¹

He compares the freedom and force of the *wind*, the breath of God, with the action of the Spirit.²

He spoke of the delicate fashioning, the directing and reproving of the Spirit under the figure of the *finger* of God.³

It was John the Baptist who contrasted his own baptism, of water only, with the more thor-

¹ St. John vii. 37, 38.

² St. John iii. 8.

³ St. Luke xi. 20.

ough purification effected by the baptism which Christ would bestow, with the Holy Ghost and with *fire*.⁴

This last emblem of the Oil or *Unction* is found in the Epistle of John the beloved disciple. He has been speaking of false teachers who had left the Church, the Christian society, and who were seeking to lead persons away from faith in Christ as the Son of God. And then he says:

You Christians have an unction, or anointing, from the Holy One (*i.e.*, from Christ, the incarnate Son of God), and you intuitively know all things, you have a spiritual perception with regard to all the great truths of your religion. I did not write unto you because you know not the truth, but to remind you, because you know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth, such as the false teachers' denial of Jesus as the Son of God. The unction which ye received of Him abideth in you (it was no temporary gift), and you are not in need so that you require, in the sense of being dependent upon, an external and human instructor to teach you: but as His unction teaches you of all things (and it is true and is no lie), even as it taught you, abide in Him.

In this symbol, as in the others, we have a common, everyday external object used to set

⁴ St. Matt. iii. 11.

forth and signify an inward spiritual gift. This, of course, is the underlying principle in our Lord's teaching by parables—earthly stories with a heavenly meaning,—and in the whole system of sacraments, where an outward and visible sign is used at once to tell of and to be a means for conveying a corresponding inward spiritual grace.

How then does the unction symbolize the influence of the Holy Spirit?

I. In ancient times the use of oil in anointing commonly went along with the use of water in washing. After the bath for cleansing, persons anointed themselves, or were rubbed with oil, for its strengthening and beautifying effect. You will recall two references to this practice in the Gospels. When our Lord is warning us against ostentatious fasting, with the object of being noticed by others, He says, Don't make a show of your self-discipline; when you fast, wash your face and anoint your head.*

The poor woman who had been an outcast in the city, in her penitence washed our Lord's feet with her tears and wiped them with her flowing hair, and then anointed them with the ointment that she had brought.*

This custom was taken up by the Christian

* St. Matt. vi. 17.

* St. Luke vii. 46.

Church. A sacred washing, Holy Baptism, was the sacrament of initiation, the new birth, from above, of water and the Spirit. The thought of the Spirit's *cleansing* suggested the thought of other effects of His presence, *invigorating and adorning* the soul. These were represented (at first apparently in *language*, and a little later in *outward ceremony*) by the sacred anointing which followed the sacred bath. Before the end certainly of the second century, it was the custom to anoint the newly baptized with consecrated unction.⁷ After a little while it became the ordinary practice of the Church for a priest to baptize, to administer the sacred washing, while the Bishop administered the unction, along with the laying on of hands, in Confirmation, invoking, just as we do, on those who had been regenerated, and had received the forgiveness of their sins, further gifts of the indwelling Spirit, to strengthen and confirm their Christian faith and life.⁸

⁷ Tertullian, 200 A. D., *Concerning Baptism*, chapters 7 and 8: "Having come out of the font, we are thoroughly anointed with oil, after the ancient law, in which they were wont to be anointed unto the priesthood. . . . Thus, too, in our case the unction runs down our flesh carnally, but profits spiritually, in the same way as the *act* of Baptism itself, too, is carnal, in that we are plunged in water; the *effect* spiritual, in that we are freed from sins. . . . In the next place the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit through the words of benediction."

⁸ Prayer before the Laying on of Hands in the Order of Confirmation.

While in some parts of the Christian Church the use of unction in Confirmation has practically superseded the laying on of hands, which without doubt was the outward sign used by the apostles in calling forth the gift of the Holy Ghost;⁹ with us the use of unction (or chrism, which is simply the Greek word) has been altogether dropped—unhappily, we may think. The omission was undoubtedly due to a desire to simplify all rites, and to prescribe nothing for which the direct authority of our Lord or His apostles could not be given. You will understand; I am not saying that St. John's language in his Epistle presupposes the sacramental use of unction. On the contrary his language probably largely helped to sanction, if not to introduce, the ceremony. But his *language* was based on the *idea*, and took for granted the *inner gift*, which very shortly afterwards came to be expressed by the Church's symbolic and sacramental use of unction. St. Paul also speaks of Christians being *anointed*, *sealed*, and *strengthened* by the Holy Spirit, the three terms all referring to Confirmation, partly to the outward ceremonies, and partly to the inner gift—the earnest or firstfruits of the Spirit in our hearts.¹⁰

II. Along with the everyday use of anointing,

⁹ Acts viii. 17, xix. 6; Heb. vi. 2.

¹⁰ II. Cor. i. 21, 22.

which was common among Greeks and Romans as well as Jews, there was a parallel sacred use of oil among the Jews, as among Gentiles, which likewise suggested this Christian symbolism—in the language of St. John and in the later practice of the Church.

Oil was employed in the consecration, or setting apart for sacred uses, of both persons and things. We read of Jacob pouring oil upon the pillar which he set up at Bethel, where he had his dream of the heavenly stairway as he fled from Esau.¹¹

The tabernacle and its furniture were thus consecrated. The high priests were set apart by anointing.¹²

So were kings. David speaks of Saul as “the Lord’s anointed.” Elijah is told to anoint Elisha as prophet in his stead.¹³

This symbolism of anointing in the case of those specially set apart for God’s service, suggested the title of “the Anointed One” (which is the meaning of the Hebrew “Messiah” and the Greek “Christ”) for the promised Deliverer, in whom the priestly, prophetic and royal offices would find their perfect realization.¹⁴

¹¹ Gen. xxviii. 18, xxxi. 13, xxxv. 14.

¹² Ex. xxx. 26, xl. 10; Lev. iv. 3, 5.

¹³ I. Sam. x. 1, xxvi. 11; I. Kings xix. 16.

¹⁴ Comp. Isaiah lxi. 1; St. Luke iv. 18.

Here we come to the meeting point of the outward sign and the inward grace or thing signified. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is the great representative of God, His consecrated Servant. His consecration is accomplished by no external anointing. The Spirit of the Lord is poured upon His manhood in fullest measure, preparing and enabling Him for the performance of His appointed work.¹⁵ So (as I have already pointed out) it was in the power of the Spirit that came upon Him at His Baptism, that He went into the wilderness to do battle with the evil one. Full of the Spirit He entered on His ministry. Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God.¹⁶

From Christ, as members of His mystical body, *we* receive our anointing of the Holy Spirit, consecrating us to His service, fitting us to carry on His work, whether as lay Christians or as called to any special ministerial order in the Church. We are called to exercise a royal priesthood, offering ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice to God, along with our Lord's perfect offering of Himself.¹⁷

This is specially realized in the Holy Com-

¹⁵ St. John iii. 34, 35.

¹⁶ St. Luke iv. 1, 14, 18; Heb. ix. 14. Comp. p. 43.

¹⁷ Rev. i. 6, v. 10; I. St. Peter ii. 9; Rom. xii. 1.

munion (to which Confirmation admits us) where we show forth our Lord's death—that is, His perfect obedience even unto death,¹⁸ and as we feed upon His broken Body and His outpoured Blood, we pledge ourselves to the same law of life—of self-sacrifice for God's glory and for the good of our brethren.

III. So we come back to the symbolism of unction or anointing with oil, its spiritual significance. The purpose of the outward anointing was to render the skin soft, to strengthen the muscles, and make the limbs supple and lissome, whether in ordinary life, or for special athletic exercises, in the race course or the wrestling match. In the same sort of way we oil machinery that it may work easily and freely. Very well, apply this to the inner man. What anointing does for the outer frame, the Spirit of God is to effect for our inner spiritual faculties. He is "the soul's anointing from above."¹⁹

We will consider our inner faculties (as before) under the three-fold grouping of mind and heart and will.

1. Our *intellectual faculties* are to be quickened by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. His presence enables us to understand the things of God which are hidden from the merely natural

¹⁸ Phil. ii. 8.

¹⁹ *Veni Creator.*

man. "Who," asks St. Paul, "knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth save the Spirit of God. We received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God."²⁰

This is what St. John specially emphasizes in the passage I read. Christians, he says, received in their Baptism and Confirmation (he refers to a definite time) an unction from the Holy One, and by virtue of this gift of the Spirit of God they have a spiritual intuition of the truth of God, which renders them to a certain extent independent of mere human instruction; and which, if only carefully guarded and acted upon, will save them from being misled by false teachers.²¹

²⁰ I. Cor. ii. 11, 12, 16.

²¹ St. Augustine, Hom. III. on 1st. Ep. of St. John, § 13. "Ye have no need," etc. "Then to what purpose is it that we, my brethren, teach you? . . . Let us leave you to His unction. . . . The sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within. Do not suppose that any man learns aught from man. We can admonish by the sound of our voice; if there be not One within that shall teach, vain is the noise we make. Have ye not all heard this present discourse? And yet how many will go from this place untaught! I for my part have spoken to all; but they to whom that unction within speaketh not, they whom the Holy Ghost within teacheth not, those go back untaught. The teachings of the master from without are a sort of aid or admonition. He that teacheth the hearts hath his chair in heaven. (I. Cor. iii. 6, 7.)"

You see the meaning of the Prayer which immediately precedes the actual laying on of hands in our Order for Confirmation. Among the different gifts of the Holy Ghost which are asked for those to be confirmed, the Bishop prays that they may receive the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, of Counsel and of Knowledge. These four at any rate are spiritual endowments of the intellect.

The Spirit of *Wisdom* enables us to pass through things temporal so as not to lose the things eternal; to subordinate material to spiritual, outward to inward interests; to think less of wealth than of character, of success than of goodness, of man's praise than of God's acceptance.

The Spirit of *Understanding* enables us to perceive the real significance and force of Creed and Scripture and Sacrament; it shows us how to build up ourselves (our moral and spiritual life) on the foundation of our most holy faith.²² It is like the gift which our Lord bestowed on the disciples on the evening of Easter Day, when He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.²³

The Spirit of *Counsel* helps us in practical decisions; to choose means well suited to the ends set before us, to make rules concerning our pray-

²² St. Jude 20.

²³ St. Luke xxiv. 27, 45.

ers and religious exercises, our almsgiving and works of mercy, our fasting and self-discipline.

The Spirit of *Knowledge* stands for that deeper knowledge which comes from personal experience—not merely to know *about* God but to know Him.”

“You have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.” Do not try, then, to puzzle out difficult questions—there are such—about Creed and Scripture and Sacrament, by mere intellectual study or argument. Read, and seek help; but look to the Spirit of Truth to lead you into all truth, bringing home to your own judgment the words which you hear and read. And for this purpose you must keep your heart pure and your conscience true. It is told of a celebrated teacher in the mediæval Church that when he had produced a treatise which showed great knowledge of divine things, he was asked, Where did you learn that? and Buonaventure replied, pointing to his prayer desk with the image of the crucified Lord above it, “There.” It is on our knees that we learn the best lessons in the best way. “In vain the tongue of the teacher toileth without, unless there be One who teaches within.”

2. So with the *affections*; these powers are by the quickening of the Spirit of God to be rendered

“II. Timothy i. 12; Phil. iii. 10.

free and vigorous in their exercise. Do not think, nor let it be thought, that the effect of religion is to dwarf or stunt our affections. They are to be consecrated, rightly directed, and then vigorously exercised. We are to love and desire and rejoice in whatever is pure and honorable, just and true, lovely and of good report. We are to hate and dread and grieve for all that is debasing and unworthy of ourselves, dishonoring to God, and contrary to His mind and will.

You see the place of joyousness in the Christian life. The presence of the Spirit of God is to render our service not dull and gloomy, but glad and free. "The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace." "The joy of the Lord is your strength."²⁵

Oil makes man's face to shine.²⁶ So the spiritual unction should impart a moral beauty, a spiritual attractiveness and graciousness, to our lives, which will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.²⁷

3. Our *will*, the power of choice, is to be invigorated, as the athlete's limbs and muscles, for exercise, whether in active resistance or in passive endurance; in grappling with difficulties and ful-

²⁵ Gal. v. 22; Nehem. viii. 10.

²⁶ Psalm civ. 15.

²⁷ Tit. ii. 10.

filling duties. Our will needs to be strengthened, that we may stand by our convictions, and carry out our principles, that we may withstand ridicule, bear loss or even persecution for the truth's sake.

So it was with our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temptation and in the Passion.²⁸ Through the eternal Spirit—inspiring and upholding His manhood, directing aright all its faculties—He offered Himself without spot to God. So by virtue of the unction we receive from Him are we to be enabled to do and bear and dare all that may be appointed for us—to do all such good works as God has prepared for us to walk in.²⁹

It has been said that "Preaching is making men think, and feel as they think, and act as they

²⁸ "As Christ after His Baptism and the descent of the Holy Ghost went forth and vanquished the adversary, so likewise, having after Holy Baptism and the mystical Chrism put on the whole armour of the Holy Ghost, do ye stand against the power of the enemy, and vanquish it, saying, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'"—St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, A. D. 347. Lect. xxi.

A writer of the fifth century says: "The Holy Ghost, which descends with His saving presence on the waters of Baptism, there gives us the plenitude of perfection to make us innocent; but in Confirmation He gives us an augmentation of grace. Because in this world we are to live all our lives among invisible enemies, and to walk in the midst of dangers; in Baptism we are born again to life, Confirmation arms and prepares those who are reserved to fight the battles and combats of this life."—Bingham, *Christian Antiquities*, vol. IV., p. 229. (Bk. XII., iii. § 6.)

²⁹ Prayer of Thanksgiving after Holy Communion.

feel." This certainly is my highest ambition in any preaching I am allowed to undertake—to make people think, and realize the great truths of God's revelation, the seriousness of life, the privileges we enjoy; and then to help them to feel as they think, and to act as they feel. This is ever the right order. Our religion is not based on emotion. It is based on facts. These must be rationally apprehended. Then our affections are to be correspondingly moved, and our will stirred. This is what the Holy Spirit, "the soul's anointing from above," would accomplish—enlightening our understanding, enkindling our affections, strengthening and enabling our will.



